

VZCZCXRO1252
PP RUEHHM
DE RUEHHI #0770 0940551
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 040551Z APR 06 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1361
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 4675
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 0860
RUEKJCS/DOD WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS HANOI 000770

SIPDIS

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BANGKOK FOR REO (JAMES WALLER, DANIEL KIEFER)

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: VIETNAM'S NOMINATION FOR FY06 OESI PROGRAM

REF: STATE 38577

1. (U) Mission Vietnam is pleased to submit a project proposal, developed by ESTHOff and Health Attache, for consideration under the FY06 funding for Oceans, Environment and Science Initiatives (OESI) program to promote democracy and good governance, leverage other funding, and advance U.S. negotiating objectives. The proposal, entitled Mitigating the Impact of Dioxin-contaminated Hot Spots in Vietnam, builds on the Memorandum of Understanding to promote joint scientific research on health and environmental effects of Agent Orange (AO)/ dioxin in Vietnam, signed in 2002. Full reconciliation between Vietnam and the United States will be difficult if not impossible to achieve without a resolution of the AO issue. Without question, advancing this issue in a positive, tangible way will facilitate the advancement of other U.S. policies and negotiating objectives in Vietnam.

2. (U) The objective of the proposed project is to assist the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to develop a strategic vision and detailed plan for remediation of dioxin contaminated areas in the Danang Airport, which can be used as a model for remediation of other contaminated sites. Such a plan would provide a needed platform from which the GVN can leverage support from the local and international donor communities, via the creation of a multilateral trust fund mechanism, for full-scale mitigation of all remaining hotspot sites. As proposed, the \$300,000 project would be funded through an inter-agency agreement to the Office of Research and Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which will provide matching funds of approximately US\$55,000.

3. (U) Mission Management strongly supports the AO/dioxin remediation project proposal for the OESI program as it directly supports the Mission's Performance Plan and advances the joint scientific cooperation on the environmental effects of AO in Vietnam. The OES regional hub office in Bangkok also endorses our proposal submission. The full proposal has been sent by email to the OESI Coordinator Lynette Poulton Kamakura as requested in reftel.

4. (SBU) Comment. Prime Minister Pham Van Khai asked President Bush for help with the AO issue during their June 2005 meeting in the Oval Office. No doubt, the issue will be on the Vietnamese agenda for the President's November 2006 visit to Hanoi. Moving ahead on this project, particularly if it leads to a multilateral trust fund to deal with the issue, would completely change the tenor of

that discussion. End Comment.

MARINE